

## Substance Abuse Coalition Meeting Minutes: 12/1/15

Attending: Michael Butler ( Dedham Selectman), Monica DeWinter ( Needham Public Health Department), Carol Reid ( Needham Public Health), Billy Beets ( Narcotics Anonymous), Mike D'Entremont ( Dedham Police Chief), Pat Cronin (MOAR), Lee Anne Jasset ( Dedham Board of Health), Amy Thomas, Janet Whelton, Jessica Gardner ( Dedham Public Health Nurse), Susan Fay

Mike Butler opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Jessica Gardner reported that the DA is working on creating kits for families of substance abuse patients to assist them in helping their family member. Mike also thanked Paul McMurtry for his recent panel discussion at Dedham Middle School on the opioid abuse issue.

Mike also reported that Fallon ambulance reports that 2015 has been consistent with 2014 on substance abuse cases. So far, Dedham has experienced 4 fatalities. There have been 27 Narcan administrations with 22 successful reversals.

Mike introduced Carol Reid who was the lead applicant for the state grant which will yield \$100,000 for Dedham, Needham, Norwood, and Westwood over the next 4 years. Carol has already held an initial meeting to determine how to proceed. Phase 1 will be data gathering.

Michael Welch, Superintendent of Schools, reports that Dedham will be administering the Communities That Care survey. The Metro West Health Foundation has been surveying high school students since 2006 and has available trend data at [mwhealth.com](http://mwhealth.com)

Janet and Amy have been publicizing the local Learn2Cope and NarAnon meetings. A new initiative of advertising in The Transcript instead of The Times was discussed. Janet Gorman, a bereaved parent, would like to start a mother's support group for those mother's who have lost a child to substance abuse.

Billy Beets reported on his work in the Norfolk County prison. The prison generally has 50 - 60 inmates in the intensive drug unit. Dedham Alternative Center is a pre-release facility to help ease transitions into community. Billy reported that many pre-trial prisoners will be sentenced but others will be back on streets. This is the group Billy would like to work with. Billy reports that most of these people are males aged 20 - 30.

It was noted that to have a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in Dedham, we need to secure a space and volunteer leaders. Pat Cronin suggested using facilities where AA meetings occur. The West Roxbury NA meeting disbanded. About 5 -6 core group members are required to start a regular meeting. To be an NA leader, you cannot be on replacement therapy. There was discussion as to how many NA meetings exist in Norfolk County. There are meetings in Canton and Milton.

Pat Cronin presented information about MOAR: Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery. MOAR is a non-profit recovery advocacy organization which receives state funding as well as private donations. They now have 3 full-time regional coordinators to work with the state on legislative initiatives and plan four large awareness events. The Dedham coordinator is John Fortz.

Pat reported that private insurers cover 5 days of detox, then the “parity law” should come into play. The Parity Law states that insurers should provide equal coverage for substance abuse and mental health issues as for physical health issues. This law is not being enforced apparently.

Pat noted the process of receiving care: Detox ( 5 days) leads to Holding. Holding can be a TSS or CSS. TSS stands for Transitional Support Services and is state funded. CSS stands for Clinical Stabilization Services and is funded by MassHealth. One example is AdCare. From here, patients move to a long term recovery facility such as Hope House, a recovery home. Legislators are looking for ways to ease the transition from detox into further treatment. A successful path is often CSS to TSS.

There have been problems with private insurers not complying with the new law mandating coverage of 14 days of care, including detox. This is one role for MOAR as they assist those who are denied coverage for these services.

Recovery Homes are state funded and regulated. Sober houses are not regulated and are often unhealthy and over-crowded. MASH is the Mass Association of Sober Houses which has formed an accreditation process to hopefully rectify this.

It appears at this point that the best insurance for substance abuse care is MassHealth.

Mike noted that our first goal is having Narcan available to all who would benefit. In Dedham, there are about 200-300 families currently coping with substance abuse. How else to best help these families? East Bridgewater has created a drop-in center for recovery help. Some towns, such as Haverhill have dedicated staff to assist families and patients.

It was noted that the Sheriff’s office is trying very hard to assist released prisoners with transitioning back into society by placing people in recovery homes. A “re-entry” program named Wyman is an example.